

## Agricultural Burning Practices & Research Task Force #62 Meeting Summary

DATE: November 18, 2004

LOCATION: Benton County Clean Air Authority, Richland WA.

<b><u>Members Present</u></b>		<b><u>Representing</u></b>
Grant Pfeifer- Chair	Air Quality Program	Department of Ecology
Don Potts	WA. Dept. of Agricultural	WA. Dept. of Agriculture
Jay Penner	Washington Association of Wheat Growers	Agricultural Community
Michael Ingham	Alfalfa Seed Industry	Agricultural Community
Larry Cochran	WA. Assn. of Conservation Districts	Conservation Districts
Dave Lauer	Benton County Clean Air Authority	Eastern Washington Local Air Authorities
<b><u>Members Absent</u></b>		
Michael Bush	WSU Extension	Academia, (Tree Fruit)
John Cornwall	Grass Seed Industry	Grass Seed Industry
Sally Liu	University Of Washington	Public Health
William Johnston	Washington State University	Academia, (Crop & Soil)

### **Introductions, Announcements**

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The 62<sup>nd</sup> Task force meeting was held at the Benton Clean Air Authority office in Richland, Washington. The Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force (Task Force) meeting began with the introduction of Task Force members and guests.

The November meeting is reserved for a report of the yearly agricultural burning program recap and a discussion about the previous year's burn season. The November meeting is also scheduled for scoping changes and discussion about Best Management Practices, (BMP's).

Before the recap and BMP discussion, a number of items were distributed;

- The Northwest research Center for Particulate Air Pollution and Health is holding a one day symposium on January 24, 2005. Information about the symposium was distributed.
- Two research updates from Lewis Engineering were distributed:
  - ❶ Liquor Generation and Field Application
  - ❷ Pulping and Bleaching Conditions for White Paper Grades Containing Alfalfa Straw Pulp.
- Ecology's 2004 Permit Applicant Survey.

## **Burn Season 2004 Recap**

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Jon Jones, Department of Ecology, (Ecology), staff person from the Eastern Regional Office presented the yearly recap. The spring 2004 burn season was considered a “normal” spring. Permitted acres, weather and daily burn decisions were about average when compared to the last 3 spring burn seasons. The summer burn season was highlighted by fire safety burn bans and smoke impacts from wild fires.

The burn team was involved in the Clear Sky validation flights this summer and fall. Clear Sky is the smoke dispersion model developed by Washington State University and used by both Washington and Idaho as one of the tools in making the daily burn decision.

The fall burn season for 2004 witnessed burn bans, early fall wet weather in some locations and long periods of poor ventilation in nearly all locations. Fall also had increases in permitted acres that put more pressure on allowing burning under marginal ventilation days. It was pointed out that an increase in fall acres that are permitted for burning does not necessarily mean a total increase of burning for this crop year, because the spring 2005 level is as yet unknown.

During the general discussion about the burn season a number of issues were raised;

- Formation of a new permit, the windrow permit.
- If a smoke intrusion occurs, should the department of Ecology submit a press release?
- Is there a set value or monitor reading that is the cut off point for allowing farmers to burn?
- Clearer language on the spot burn permits.
- Ecology should host tours of how they make the daily burn decision, so farmers can view the process.
- How can Ecology and /or the Task Force get permitting authorities more involved in the burn program, i.e. helping out with metering acres on a daily basis,
- The burn program still has concerns about the timeliness of receiving post burn reports. Post Burn reports are one of the tools the burn team uses when considering how many acres to burn each day.
- A burn team member should be in the field every day to evaluate the burn decision

Each of the items listed above was discussed by the Task Force. No resolutions were agreed upon or voted on by the Task Force. The public attending the meeting also participated in the discussions.

**Special note;** The Alfalfa seed producers in the Walla Walla area might have an increase in bale burns if the company that ships the residue overseas ops out on this part of their business.

### **Rulemaking update 173-430 Agricultural Burning**

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Grant briefed the Task Force about rulemaking, (Agricultural Burning WAC 173-430), and where we are in the process. The administrative requirements for starting the process are complete and committee selection and scoping of the revisions to the Ag. Burn rule are scheduled to start the beginning of 2005. No specific dates or timeline are available. Melissa McEachron, Ecology's lead for the rule making process will be invited to attend and give a progress report at Task Force meeting #63.

**The Task Force members expressed a strong desire and willingness to be involved in rule making, and to serve as the core of the rule work group.**

### **BMP's**

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The main direction that the Task Force took in scoping changes about the approved BMP's:

Ecology shouldn't permit fall burning unless there was a specific weed or pest problem, or a crop was to be planted in the same season as the permit was issued.

Task Force to consider a table or additions that explain which BMP governs when two or more are possible:

- going from orchard to a field crop
- going from alfalfa seed to wheat
- Others?

There is still a need for better clarification with the spot burn permit.

All suggested changes to BMP's are to be distributed to Task Force members before the next meeting.

### **Alternatives to Burning Manual**

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Ecology had contracted with Carlson Consulting to gather and compile literature about alternatives to agricultural burning. The project was funded with an EPA grant.

Donna Hansen, a Carlson Consulting staff member, gave a comprehensive power point presentation and the process for developing the manual,

"Alternatives to Agricultural Burning"

- The Task Force would like to review the final copy.
- The Task Force would like to have more discussion about the manual before they decide whether they want to officially endorse the manual.

- The Task Force asked that they be dropped from any listings or endorsement from the manual.
- The Task Force would also like to have the manual in a different type binding.

The manual is intended to be a reference document that contains alternatives to burning. The manual is a tool that can be used by permitting authorities, permit applicants, Task Force members and the general public.

It was decided that the manual would not be further distributed until;

- After the February Task Force meeting, giving members the opportunity to review the final copy.
- Drop the Task Force from the contributors page
- Bind manual in a three ring binder, (the original design).

### **Public Comment**

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Melissa Hansen suggested that farmers tour the Ecology office and see how the daily burn decision is made. Possibly the same time as Ag. Expo, since a lot of farmers will be in the Spokane area.